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Eradication of poverty and other development issues: implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)

Letter dated 8 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to General Assembly resolution 57/265 on the establishment of the World Solidarity Fund adopted on 20 December 2002, and to paragraph 23 (h) of the September 2005 World Summit Outcome document whereby the Heads of State and Government resolved to operationalize the World Solidarity Fund, I have the honour to inform you that, at a formal ceremony in Tunis on 29 April 2008, in the presence of Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the French Republic, Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, urged the international community to join in the global solidarity effort aimed at shielding humankind from the impact of soaring prices of oil and commodities on the world market (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 58 (a).

(*Signed*) Habib **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 8 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic and French]

Appeal from Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, urging the international community to join in the global solidarity effort

"I must draw your attention to the warning signs of extremely complicated economic and financial problems in the making as a result of soaring oil and commodity prices, especially the prices of grains, that some countries have even decided to stop exporting. This is likely to spark famine anew in the poorest countries of the world, cause further marginalization and exclusion and have adverse consequences for human dignity and threaten the very survival of humankind in many areas of the world; the situation could be further aggravated by wars, devastating conflicts and natural disasters the impact of which is unpredictable.

Given this precarious situation, we call on all oil-rich countries to join in the global solidarity effort in order to protect humankind from the above-mentioned risks by allocating a dollar from every barrel of oil sold, as we have proposed, to the World Solidarity Fund established by the United Nations and to serve similar humanitarian goals.

We also urge international financial, economic and trade institutions to pay greater attention to policies geared towards the production of crops for human consumption, since the right to food is synonymous with the right to life and is an integral element of basic human rights which must be guaranteed for all. It is morally reprehensible to make the right to food subject to commercial concerns, convert crops grown for human consumption into biofuels or to speculate in crops grown for human consumption on the world market."